DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 325 494 TM 015 713

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TITLE A Study of the Fifty States To Determine the Effect of Educational Reform on Seven Educational Improvement Areas.
PUB DATE Oct 90
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Educational Research Association (12th, Chicago, IL, October 17-20, 1990).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Change; Educational Finance; *Educational Improvement; Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; Geographic Regions; National Surveys; Outcomes of Education; *Program Implementation; Remedial Programs; School District Autonomy; *School Districts; State Departments of Education; *State Programs; Summer Programs; Teacher Qualifications; Testing Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Reform Efforts

ABSTRACT

The status and effects of state-initiated educational reform were studied for local school districts in seven areas of educational improvement (EI): (1) state-mandated testing of students; (2) state curricular outcomes; (3) summer remediation; (4) state evaluation of local districts; (5) more stringent teacher requirements; (6) mentoring; and (7) state monies allocated for programs for at-risk students. Study objectives were to determine: the impact of reform on the seven EI measures; geographic differences among the states in the implementation of EI measures; which states have implemented EI measures without reform movement pressures; and the regions most responsive to educational reform pressures. Responses to survey questionnaires were received from educational officers in all 50 states. Reform influenced each of the four geographic areas (East, Midwest, South, and West), but the South was the most influenced by the reform movement. A significant result of educational reform has been increased control by state agencies of local school boards. Pressures from business/industrial leaders have required several state education agencies and/or legislators to develop and require a variety of mandated programs for local school districts. State-mandated programs have taken away control from many local school boards. School districts that have not kept pace with sound educational practices may benefit from the first phase of educational reform. Four tables present study data. (SLD)

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A STUDY OF THE FIFTY STATES TO DETERMINE THE EFFECT OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM ON SEVEN EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT AREAS

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
OCTOBER 17-20, 1990

TM015713

A Study of the Fifty States to Determine the Effect of Educational Reform on Seven Educational Improvement Areas

The current education reform movement began in 1983 with the findings of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Reform* by the National Commission on Excellence on Education.[1] Concerns from business and industrial leaders regarding the low level skills of high school graduates, declining SAT scores, and other factors have forced state education departments and state legislators to implement programs to counteract the perceived educational decline.[2] These state mandates have had a tremendous effect forcing local school districts to implement a variety of programs, and at the same time reducing the power of local school boards.

This 1989 study was designed to serve as a descriptive analysis of the status and effect of state-initiated reform for local school districts in seven areas of educational improvement. Areas of educational improvement were identified through a review of the literature.[3] Educational improvement areas included: state testing of students, state curricular outcomes, summer remediation, state evaluation of local districts, more stringent teacher requirements, mentoring, and monies allocated for at-risk students.[4] The study focused on the following four objectives:

1. What has been the impact of educational reform on the seven educational improvement measures?
2. What geographic differences existed among the states in the implementation of the educational improvement measures?

3. Which states have implemented education improvement measures without the pressures from the reform movement?
4. Which regions of the country (East, Midwest, South and West) have been most responsive to the pressures of the educational reform?

Survey questionnaires were mailed to the chief education officer in each of the fifty states. Responses were received from all fifty respondents with many state officials forwarding supporting data on program implementation. The study was limited to the responses of the educational officers and supporting data returned with survey questionnaires.

Chief educational officers were asked if the educational reform movement had influenced development of new programs. Forty-nine state education officers indicated the reform movement had some effect on program development, with only the Colorado official reporting that Colorado was a "local control state" and state-initiated reform had not been a factor.

State Mandated Testing

Standardized testing has been espoused by many business, industrial leaders and state legislators as a yardstick to determine school effectiveness for more than a decade.[5] Forty-two states required standardized testing programs for local school districts (See Table 1). Examination of the four geographical regions revealed 11 southern, 9 midwestern, 11 eastern, and 11 western states required standardized testing for local school districts. State testing was in effect in all southern states but Texas. In the Midwest, Iowa, Minnesota

Table 1

State Activity and Effect of Educational Reform on State Testing, Summer Remediation, and State Curricular Outcomes.

STATE	REGION	STATE TEST OF STDTS.	RESULT REFORM	SUMMER REMED.	RESULT REFORM	STATE CURRICULUM OUTCOMES	RESULT REFORM
Alabama	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alaska	W	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Arizona	W	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Arkansas	S	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
California	W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colorado	W	No	No	No	No	No	No
Connecticut	E	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Delaware	E	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Florida	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Georgia	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hawaii	W	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Idaho	W	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Illinois	MW	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Indiana	MW	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Iowa	MW	No	No	No	No	No	No
Kansas	MW	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Kentucky	S	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Louisiana	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maine	E	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Maryland	E	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Massachusetts	E	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Michigan	MW	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Minnesota	MW	No	No	No	No	No	No
Mississippi	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Missouri	MW	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Montana	MW	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Nebraska	MW	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Nevada	W	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
New Hampshire	E	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
New Jersey	E	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
New Mexico	W	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
New York	E	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
North Carolina	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Dakota	MW	No	No	No	No	No	No
Ohio	MW	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oklahoma	W	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Oregon	W	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Pennsylvania	E	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Rhode Island	E	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
South Carolina	S	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
South Dakota	MW	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Tennessee	S	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Texas	S	No	No	No	No	No	No
Utah	W	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Vermont	E	No	No	No	No	No	No
Virginia	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Washington	W	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
West Virginia	E	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Wisconsin	MW	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Wyoming	W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Michigan and North Dakota did not have state testing programs. In the East, the official from Vermont reported there was not a state testing program for public schools; while in the West only Utah and Colorado did not have a state testing program.

Twenty-six respondents representing the four geographical areas stated that standardized testing had been influenced by the educational reform movement with reform having the greatest effect in the South. Ten southern respondents stated that standardized testing was implemented due to reform. Reform was less of an influence in the Midwest with 4 respondents indicating that reform has influenced state mandated standardized testing programs. Five state education officers representing the East and 7 respondents from the West reported that educational reform had resulted in standardized testing for local school districts.

State Curricular Outcomes

The educational reform movement has resulted in many states developing state curricular outcomes for local school districts. State education officers from 33 states reported state curricular outcomes in existence. State curricular outcomes were most evident in the South and West with 10 state education officers for each region reporting the existence of state curricular outcomes. Seven midwestern and 6 eastern officials reported the existence of state curricular outcomes.

Twenty-one state superintendents from the four geographic areas revealed the education reform movement had resulted in development of state curricular outcomes. The

education reform movement had the greatest effect in the South with 10 respondents indicating that state curricular outcomes had resulted from the reform movement. Five midwestern state education officers and 5 western respondents reported that curricular outcomes had resulted from the reform movement. Only one official from the East, West Virginia, indicated reform had resulted in state curricular outcomes.

Summer Remediation

One concept often associated with testing and state curricular outcomes is summer remediation. Eighteen state officials representing the four geographic areas reported that summer remediation programs were in effect. Eight respondents from the South, 4 from the East, 3 from the Midwest, and 3 state education officers from the West reported the existence of summer remediation programs.

Thirteen state education officers suggested summer remediation programs had resulted from educational reform. Reform significantly influenced southern states with 6 respondents reporting summer remediation programs as a result of educational reform. Two state education officers from the East, 2 from the West and 3 respondents from the Midwest suggested the reform movement had resulted in development of summer remediation programs.

State Evaluation of Local Districts

Thirty of the fifty state education officers reported evaluation of local school districts by State Departments of Education (See Table 2). Evaluations may encompass on site visitations, a review of standardized test results, examination of district legal standards, a self-study, goal setting, and/or the development of action plans. State evaluation of local districts was most likely to have occurred in the South and East with 9 state education officers having reported state assessment of local school districts. Eight respondents from the Midwest and 4 respondents from the West indicated that State Departments of Education evaluated local school districts. Southern states were most affected by the reform movement with 8 state education officers reporting the reform had resulted in state assessment of local school districts. Three respondents from the Midwest, 3 from the West and 2 state education officers representing the West reported that reform had influence state evaluation of local school districts.

More Stringent Teacher Requirements

Increasing teacher requirements for new teachers is an area that has seen a great deal of state activity. Thirty-eight of fifty state education officers reported more stringent teacher requirements had been enacted. Increased teacher requirements might involve additional university requirements, taking the National Teacher Examination or a similar test.[6] Eleven states in the South and 9 in each of the other three geographic regions had increased teacher

Table 2

State Activity and Effect of Educational Reform on State Evaluation of Local Districts and More Stringent Teacher Requirments.

STATE	REGION	STATE EVALUATION LOCAL DISTS.	RESULT OF REFORM	MORE STRINGENT TEACHER REQMTS.	RESULT OF REFORM
Alabama	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alaska	W	No	No	No	No
Arizona	W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Arkansas	S	Yes	No	Yes	No
California	W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colorado	W	No	No	No	No
Connecticut	E	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Delaware	E	Yes	No	No	No
Florida	S	No	No	Yes	Yes
Georgia	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hawaii	W	No	No	Yes	Yes
Idaho	W	No	No	No	No
Illinois	MW	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Indiana	MW	Yes	Yes	No	No
Iowa	MW	Yes	No	No	No
Kansas	MW	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Kentucky	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Louisiana	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Maine	E	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maryland	E	No	No	Yes	No
Massachusetts	E	No	No	Yes	Yes
Michigan	MW	No	No	Yes	No
Minnesota	MW	No	No	No	No
Mississippi	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Missouri	MW	Yes	No	Yes	No
Montana	MW	Yes	No	Yes	No
Nebraska	MW	No	No	No	No
Nevada	W	No	No	No	No
New Hampshire	E	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
New Jersey	E	Yes	No	No	No
New Mexico	W	No	No	Yes	No
New York	E	Yes	No	No	Yes
North Carolina	S	No	No	Yes	Yes
North Dakota	MW	No	No	Yes	Yes
Ohio	MW	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oklahoma	W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oregon	W	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania	E	No	No	Yes	Yes
Rhode Island	E	Yes	No	Yes	No
South Carolina	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
South Dakota	MW	No	No	Yes	Yes
Tennessee	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Texas	S	No	No	No	No
Utah	W	No	No	Yes	No
Vermont	E	Yes	No	Yes	No
Virginia	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Washington	W	No	No	Yes	No
West Virginia	E	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wisconsin	MW	Yes	No	Yes	No
Wyoming	W	No	No	Yes	Yes

requirements. Twenty-seven state education officers reported that more stringent teacher requirements had resulted from the reform movement. Reform had the most influence in the South with 9 respondents indicating reform was the primary factor in increasing teacher requirements. Seven respondents from the East, 5 from the Midwest, and 6 state education officers from the West reported more stringent teacher requirements had resulted due to the educational reform movement.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a concept that provides psycho-social and cognitive support to new teachers.[7] The first year of teaching can be stressful, and new teachers require direction and support if the needs of students are to be met during the first years of teaching. Twenty-nine state education officers reported state-sponsored mentoring programs were in effect (See Table 3). Eight state education officers from the East, 7 respondents from the from the South, 7 from the West and 7 respondents representing the Midwest reported state mentoring programs were in effect.

Educational reform had the greatest effect in the East with 6 state education officers suggesting reform influenced development of state sponsored mentoring programs. Five respondents from the South, 4 from the West, and 3 state education officers representing the Midwest reported mentoring has resulted from reform.

Table 3

State Activity and Effect of Educational Reform on Mentoring and Allocation of Monies for At-Risk Programs.

STATE	REGION	MENTORING	RESULT OF REFORM	MONIES ALLOCATED FOR AT-RISK	RESULT OF REFORM
Alabama	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alaska	W	Yes	No	Yes	No
Arizona	W	No	No	Yes	Yes
Arkansas	S	No	No	No	No
California	W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colorado	W	No	No	No	No
Connecticut	E	Yes	Yes	No	No
Delaware	E	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Florida	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Georgia	S	Yes	Yes	No	No
Hawaii	W	No	No	Yes	No
Idaho	W	Yes	Yes	No	No
Illinois	MW	No	No	Yes	Yes
Indiana	MW	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Iowa	MW	No	No	Yes	No
Kansas	MW	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kentucky	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Louisiana	S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maine	E	Yes	Yes	No	No
Maryland	E	No	No	No	No
Massachusetts	E	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Michigan	MW	No	No	No	No
Minnesota	MW	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Mississippi	S	No	No	No	No
Missouri	MW	Yes	No	No	No
Montana	MW	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Nebraska	MW	No	No	No	No
Nevada	W	No	No	No	Yes
New Hampshire	E	No	No	Yes	No
New Jersey	E	Yes	No	Yes	No
New Mexico	W	No	No	Yes	No
New York	E	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
North Carolina	S	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
North Dakota	MW	No	No	No	No
Ohio	MW	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oklahoma	W	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Oregon	W	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania	E	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rhode Island	E	No	No	Yes	Yes
South Carolina	S	No	No	Yes	Yes
South Dakota	MW	No	No	No	No
Tennessee	S	Yes	No	Yes	No
Texas	S	No	No	No	No
Utah	W	Yes	No	Yes	No
Vermont	E	Yes	No	Yes	No
Virginia	S	No	No	Yes	Yes
Washington	W	Yes	No	Yes	No
West Virginia	E	No	No	Yes	Yes
Wisconsin	MW	Yes	No	Yes	No
Wyoming	W	No	No	Yes	Yes

State Monies for At-Risk Programs

Financing of at-risk programs has received more attention by State Departments of Education and/or legislative bodies than any other reform program. Students come to school with a number of complex problems and school officials realize these problems must be addressed if learning is to occur. Thirty-five states now provide funding for at-risk programs. Funding of at-risk programs was most likely to occur in the West and East with 10 western state education officers and 9 eastern state education officers reporting state funding for at-risk programs. Funding of at-risk programs was also prevalent in the Midwest and South with 8 education officers from the South and 8 from the Midwest reporting funds were allocated for at-risk students. Twenty-one respondents suggested at-risk funding had resulted from educational reform. Reform had the greatest impact in the South and Midwest with 6 respondents from each area suggesting reform had resulted in monies for at-risk programs. Five education officers from the West and 4 from the East reported reform had resulted in funds being allocated for at-risk programs.

Concepts Most Influenced by Reform

Respondents representing forty-nine of the fifty states reported that educational reform had influenced each of the seven educational improvement areas. A sum of total responses of state education officers (See Table 4) representing the fifty states in the four geographical areas revealed that 142

Table 4

Raw and Percentage Scores of Educational Reform in Seven Educational Improvement Areas for the Four Geographic Regions of the United States

CONCEPTS IMPROVEMENT CATEGORIES	EAST	MIDWEST	SOUTH	WEST	TOTALS
State Testing of Students	5	4	10	7	26
Summer Remediation	2	3	6	2	13
State Curricular Outcomes	1	5	10	5	21
State Evaluation of Local Districts	2	3	8	3	16
More Stringent Teacher Requirements	7	5	9	6	27
Mentoring	6	3	5	4	18
Monies Allocated to At-Risk Students	4	6	[illegible]	5	21
Total Reform Each Region/Category	27	[illegible]	[illegible]	32	142
Percentage of Total Reform/Category	19.01%	[illegible]	[illegible]%	22.54%	100.00%

reform related actions had been taken in the areas of state testing of students (26), summer remediation (13), state curricular outcomes (21), state evaluation of local districts (16), more stringent teacher requirements (27), mentoring (18) and monies allocated for at-risk students (21).

Percentage of the total reform was established by taking the number of reform actions and calculating the percentage of reform for each region. Educational reform had the most influence in the South with reform occurring in 38% percent of the total reported reform categories. Areas in the South receiving the most attention were state testing of students, state curricular outcomes, more stringent teacher requirements, and state evaluation of local districts. The state of Alabama was the most active southern state with officials indicating that actions were taken in each of the seven education improvement areas.

Educational reform had less impact in the East with a rating of 19 percent of total reform categories, Midwest with 20 percent, and West with 23 percent of total reform categories. In the East, more stringent teacher requirement (7 states) and mentoring (6 states) were concepts most influenced by the reform movement. Respondents from the Midwest reported that monies to at-risk students (6 states) was the area where reform had the greatest influence. In the East, state testing of students (7 states) and more stringent teacher requirements (6 states) were areas most affected by reform.

Summary

It is clear while reform has influenced each of the four geographic areas, the South as a region of the United States has been most influenced by the educational reform movement. One result of educational reform has been the increased control of state education agencies in the operation of local school districts. Pressures from business and industrial leaders has required a number of state education agencies and/or legislators to develop and require a variety of mandated programs for local school districts. State mandated programs have taken away control from many local school boards. School districts that have not kept pace with sound educational practices may benefit from the first phase of educational reform. Longitudinal research focusing on the first phase of educational reform should be conducted to determine the effectiveness of state-initiated reform activities.

References

[1] National Commission on Excellence on Education, *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, Washington D.C., U.S. Department of Education, April 1983.

[2] Joan C. Bartz, " Policy Implications of Minimum Competency Testing, cited by Richard M. Jaeger and Carol Kehr Tittle, gen. eds., Minimum Competency Achievement Testing (California: McCutchan Publishing Company, 1980, p. 53.

[3] Arthur E. Wise, "The Two Conflicting Trends in School Reform: Legislative Learning Revisited," Phi Delta Kappan 5, (January 1988): 329.

[4] Staff development is an educational improvement tool. A 1989 study revealed that 31 states currently mandate staff development for local school districts. In 1984, 26 sates mandated staff development for local school districts.

[5] Lorrie A. Shepard, "Why We Need Better Assessments," Educational Leadership 7, (April 1989), : 4.

[6] Linda Darling-Hammond, " The Futures of Teaching," Educational Leadership 3, (November 1988) : 5.

[7] William A. Gray and Marilynne M. Gray, "Synthesis of research on Mentoring Beginning Teachers," Educational Leadership 3, (November 1985), : 38.